Parents & Carers
Guidance for Remote Learning in Highland
January 2021

Please note the advice contained in this document is for the limited and sole purpose of responding to the challenges of teaching and learning in the COVID-context. The advice will be updated to reflect changing circumstances and best practice when appropriate.

Parents and carers and remote learning

Parents and carers want the very best for their children. It is important to stress that, in a period of remote learning, parents and carers are not expected to be teachers. It is crucial that parents and carers are as certain as they can be about what remote learning is, what it means for their children and how they can continue to contribute positively and effectively to their children's learning. This guidance document aims to support parent / carer understanding of what remote learning is and how remote learning is delivered in Highland.

For learners with complex additional support needs, guidance for parents to support learning has been published by Education Scotland and can be found [here](#).

The [Highland Schools Digital Schools Hub](#) provides support for Parents & Carers and pre-recorded videos for learners, that help them utilise the tools for remote learning.

Device Access in Highland & Background

Connectivity: MiFi devices, hand held devices that help connect devices to the internet (where there is some network) are available where appropriate (basic criteria need to be met). Please contact your school so that they can apply on your behalf.

All learners and educators in Highland are able to benefit from the digital infrastructure in Highland and the dedicated support for technology in education which aims to:

- Develop the skills and confidence of educators in the appropriate and effective use of digital technology to support learning and teaching.
- Improve access to digital technology for all learners.
- Ensure that digital technology is a central consideration in all areas of curriculum and assessment delivery.
- Empower leaders of change to drive innovation and investment in digital technology for teaching and learning.

Before Christmas 2020 the First Minister announced that most school pupils would learn remotely, rather than in school, until Monday 18 January 2021. On 4 January 2021 the First Minister confirmed that the Scottish Government had decided to extend this date and keep school buildings closed to the majority of pupils until 1 February 2021. This will be reviewed in mid-January. This change applies to all pupils, except vulnerable children, and children of key workers where the is no viable alternative. It includes nursery provision, as well as primary and secondary schools.

The advice in this document is based on guidance from Education Scotland and also the Highland ICT in Learning Strategy.

The Curriculum in Highland

The core principles of Scotland's curriculum and the four fundamental capacities at its centre remain critical in putting learners at the heart of education.

Wellbeing has been a strong focus of all aspects of our learning and teaching and remains a key priority for the Highland Council.

During this period of remote learning, the curriculum should continue to build on the recovery work that has been done in schools and should include a focus on promoting and developing skills, that will support independent learning, as part of our online curriculum. However, expectations must be reasonable and manageable, for both pupils, the school community (parents & carers) and staff.

Delivery of Remote Learning in Highland

Remote learning can be delivered in a variety of ways: some high-tech, some low-tech and sometimes requiring no technological solutions. In the current context, digital and online approaches will be commonly used. Teachers may be interacting in a 'live' way with pupils using the Highland Tools e.g. Google Meet, equally independent tasks and skill based learning could be utilised with a variety of approaches to encourage or reduce screen time. The number of 'live' interactions must be carefully managed taking in to full consideration the needs of all

Local context in Highland is of importance and school staff will know their learners best, so schools may plan remote learning experiences in line with their own curriculum rationale.

There is an expectation that schools across Highland utilise the Google for Education tools, as the safeguarding aspects of the way this has been set up are fundamental. Schools may also be using applications agreed with Central Officers to support learning e.g. Seesaw.

It is important that screen time is limited for both pupils and staff and it is not expected that learners engage online for the whole school day. While a timetable can be used to structure the pupil day, there is no expectation that staff or pupils would be online for a 'normal' school day. Delivery must be sustainable for both students and staff alike, and must not harm the well-being of either. Parents & Carers who are working remotely at home will also have different associated pressures and so flexibility remains as a key to home learning.

Remote learning involves a combination of 'live' interactions between teacher and learners, and also learning which takes place away from the direct presence of the class teacher. It may involve a range of learning experiences which take place in a variety of learning spaces, including outdoors. Live' interaction does not just refer to live streaming of direct teaching but can cover many types of face-to-face engagement such as assemblies, check ins etc

Learners should also be encouraged to engage in practical tasks, skill-based tasks, research tasks, project work, practical opportunities, discussion and other activities that can be carried out away from a digital device. There should be an emphasis on active learning and children working independently.

It is expected that learning at home activities will include provision of opportunities to consolidate learning and extend and enhance learning to take account of and meet the needs of

learners and their families. This may be accommodated by providing access to pre-recorded lessons, presentations, lesson notes, diagrams or links to useful websites.

In Highland we have a number of partners who have been supporting through the COVID period. This includes Eden Court, Feis Rois, Highlife Highland, Skills Development Scotland and many more third sector agencies. Learners can benefit significantly from a range of opportunities.

Effective remote learning can offer learners:

- significant autonomy over their learning

- a degree of flexibility for learners in where and when they learn

- potential for high quality consolidation of learning

- opportunities to develop and improve their skills in working independently

- increased opportunities for personalisation in learning

- opportunities for improved engagement

- enhanced parental engagement in their child's learning away from school .

In Highland we have the Highland Virtual Academy, supported by a number of teachers who work across HIghland to support learners who may be particularly vulnerable or disadvantaged due to COVID. Schools use an online referral system to support individuals to engage with education / learning. The HVA also supports a number of timetabled secondary subjects.

Child protection

We want everyone to be safe, just like being in school and we have a number of resources that can support online safety.

We also encourage pupils to follow practical advice too such as thinking about backgrounds, quiet spaces & encouraging sensible use of technology.

Wellbeing

We need to be mindful of the impact of COVID-19 on our children and young people, many of whom may have suffered loss and trauma as a result. For all learners a key focus during this period of remote learning needs to be health and wellbeing. It will be essential that remote learning approaches reflect this and we continue to work together across Highland to support our young people, schools, school community, parents & carers.

Further information for Parents / Carers:

National Improvement Hub - COVID-19 Education Recovery Group (CERG) guidance

Education Endowment Foundation - Covid-19 Resources

Parentzone - Learning at home

GLOSSARY
Concept Definition

Asynchronous learning
Children and young people undertake learning activities without direct supervision from the teacher. These activities may be digital or traditional. Learners can communicate with their teacher at their own pace or within a set time period. For example, a teacher setting a specific project and asking young people to check in through a discussion board if they have any questions

Blended learning
Includes learning that happens in real time(synchronous), alongside a teacher such as online discussions and learning which happens at the learner's pace (asynchronous) such as project work.

E-learning or electronic learning is the umbrella term used to describe education using electronic devices and digital media. Much of our learning now involves e-learning both in and outside of the classroom environment.

Learning at home
Learning at home is a broad term used to describe the learning which happens out with early learning and childcare settings and schools. It can take place through everyday activities including play and general family life, such as food preparation and cooking. It can also happen through curriculum related activities, homework, reading and sharing books.

Remote learning Occurs when a learner and teacher are separated by time and/ or distance and therefore cannot meet in a traditional classroom setting. Information is typically transmitted via technology such as email, discussion boards, video conferencing, etc. No physical presence is required.

Synchronous learning
Online learning in which children and young people can learn from their teacher in real time. For example, a teacher teaching to a group of children or class using digital technologies.

Adapted from: https://education.gov.scot/media/bkunccqa/glossary.pdf